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ABSTRACT

The practicum described in this report consisted of a reading program that was developed and implemented to improve attitudes toward leisure-time reading with an increased book involvement among elementary students. A target group of 30 students in a fourth grade self-contained class was established for the program. The program contained three basic strategies: read-aloud sessions conducted by teachers, parents, and other adults; daily sustained silent reading periods; and the keeping of a student reading log. Success was measured by comparing students' pre- and post-attitude surveys, pre- and post-teacher observation logs of sustained silent reading behavior, and pre- and post-classroom averages of the total number of books read. Results were positive, with reading the most frequently named favorite leisure time activity at the end of the 10-week program, sustained silent reading behavior significantly improved, and significant increases made in the number of books students read. (Three figures and 3 tables of data are included, and 24 references are attached. Appendixes include a monthly report of volunteer support, results from the Degrees of Reading Power Test, a tally of results of parent and student surveys, and samples of forms and lists.) (Author/SR)

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Improving Fourth Graders' Attitudes Toward Leisure-Time Reading and Increasing Book Involvement

by
DEBORAH A. BECK

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A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education at Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

The abstract of this report may be placed in a national Database System for reference.

June 1990

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Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Signed Deborah A. Beck

Abstract

Improving Fourth Graders' Attitudes Toward Leisure-Time Reading and Increasing Book Involvement.
Beck, Deborah A., 1990: Practicum Report, Nova University, The Center for the Advancement of Education.
Descriptors: Elementary Education/Independent Reading/Silent Reading/Reading Aloud to Others/Reading Attitudes/Parents/Teachers/ Reading Habits of Elementary Students/ Reading Interests/Leisure Time Reading/ Recreational Reading/Home Reading Behavior/Reading Incentive Programs/Voluntary Reading Programs in Elementary Schools/ Sustained Silent Reading/Literature Appreciation in Elementary Grades/Logging Leisure Time Reading/

This practicum describes a reading program that was developed and implemented by the author to improve attitudes toward leisure-time reading with an increased book involvement among elementary students. A target group of 30 students in a fourth grade self-contained class was established for the program. The program contained three basic strategies for improving attitudes toward leisure-time reading with an increased book involvement: read aloud sessions conducted by teachers, parents and other adults, daily sustained silent reading periods, and the keeping of a student reading log. The writer measured success by comparing students' pre and post-attitude surveys, pre and post teacher observation logs of sustained silent reading behavior, and pre and post classroom averages of the total number of books read. It was concluded by the writer that reading attitudes can be improved by using read aloud role models, daily Sustained Silent Reading and journal writing, and logging number of books read. Appendices include Monthly Report of Volunteer Support, Degrees of Reading Power Test Results, Tallying Results of Parent and Student Surveys, and Samples of Forms and Lists.

Nova University
Center For The Advancement of Education
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314

Observer Verification Form

Verification of Practicum Activity

Dear Observer:

Practicum students in Nova's M.S. and Ed.S. programs are asked to provide external verification that the project activities reported in their final practicum documents took place as described. You have been designated an observer to fulfill this confirmation function by the student named below. On this sheet, then, please write a note attesting to your knowledge of the project activity described in the final practicum report to which this will be attached. (Note that you are not asked to evaluate or make judgments about the quality of the project.)

Practicum Title: Improving Fourth Grader's Attitudes Toward Leisure-Time Reading and Increasing Book Involvement

Student's Name: Deborah A. Beck

Program Site: Bradenton Date: June 15, 1990

Observer's Name: Catherine A. Kitto Catherine A. Kitto
(please print---------and sign)

Observer's position: Asst Principal Phone # (813) 349-6747

Observer's comment on impact of the project (handwritten):

Ms. Beck's Read Aloud Program was a monumental success. I participated as a reader and was so inspired by the reception and attitudes of the children that we instituted a school-wide Guest Reader day.

v

CHAPTER I

Purpose

School and Community Setting

The setting of this practicum study is a self-contained fourth grade classroom with 30 students, 11 boys and 19 girls. The class is in a public school with an enrollment of 1,006 students, and a staff of 75, including 45 teachers. The school is one of 18 elementary schools in a county on the west coast of Florida. The school from which the target population is taken draws mostly from a middle class population. Five out of 30 students in the target group receive free lunch.

There is considerable volunteer and community support for this school. Total number of volunteer hours for the month of January, 1990 was 1,453.5. The number of volunteers tutoring in the classroom, working in the media center, or assisting on special projects, such as Parent Teacher Association sponsored activities totaled 177 volunteers. (Appendix A:40) Community support programs include Pizza Hut's Book It!, a national reading incentive program for children in elementary grades, in which students of this target group participated during a five month period.

The students in the target group scored average to above average in reading comprehension on The Degrees of Reading Power Test

(DRP). This test was given in October, 1989. The DRP Test was given to 29 out of the 30 students in the target group, 11 students scored above average and 18 students scored in the average range. (Appendix B: 42) One student was not in attendance when the test was administered. Since the ability level of the target group is average to above average on the DRP Test, books should not be avoided to the extent the group does, but should be enjoyed by a higher percentage than was exhibited by the target group.

There are two students from the target group identified as having specific learning disabilities who attend special education classes for six hours per week. There are also two more students who attend speech therapy for one hour a week. Consideration of these students was influential in the outcome of this practicum study because, due to the scheduling of special education classes, some read aloud sessions were missed.

The writer of this practicum study is a fourth grade teacher with 14 years of elementary teaching experience, who has observed a decrease in leisure-time reading. The writer of this study was responsible for designing, implementing, and measuring the results of this project. The entire class of 30 students was the focus and target group of this practicum study.

Reading instruction and reading curriculum in the elementary grades continue to attract attention from educators, parents, and the community. Nevertheless, leisure-time reading habits are not taught in

the reading curriculum. Elementary schools, however, often try to state leisure-time reading as part of a school's objectives. For example, in a phone interview with an elementary teacher conducted by the writer, a program entitled Drop Everything and Read is stated as part of a school's leisure-time reading objectives. This elementary school is located in the same school district as the target group. The target group of students in this practicum project were not involved in a school-wide sustained silent reading program, since it is not part of the school's objectives.

The principal of the target group's school, in a personal interview conducted with the writer, stated that 51 percent of the students should select reading as a favorite leisure-time activity. Since only 15 percent of the students chose reading as a favorite leisure-time activity on a reading attitude survey conducted by the writer, there was a discrepancy gap of 36 percent from the 51 percent desired by the principal. Students in the target group selected sports, television viewing, and video games, in that order, as favorite leisure-time activities. This data has been summarized in Figure 1.

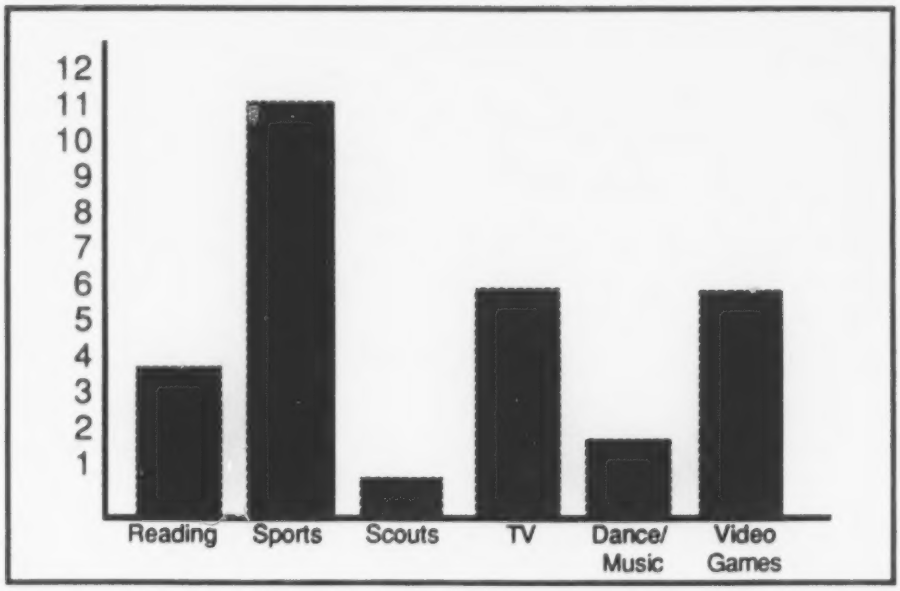

Figure 1

First Choice Leisure-Time Activities
of Fourth Graders

Students in the target group had also demonstrated a diminished interest in motivational reading programs, such as The Book It! reading program sponsored by Pizza Hut. This program encourages independent reading of books and requires the classroom teacher to set the number of books read by the students each month. If the student reaches the desired reading goal set by the teacher, the student receives a free pizza from Pizza Hut. If 100 percent of the students meet the assigned reading goals in any four of the five program months, the class earns a free pizza party donated by Pizza Hut. During the five month program, 20 students out of 30 students in the target group participated in the first

month, and by the end of the fifth month, interest had dwindled to one student's involvement in The Book It! program. This data is summarized in Figure 2.

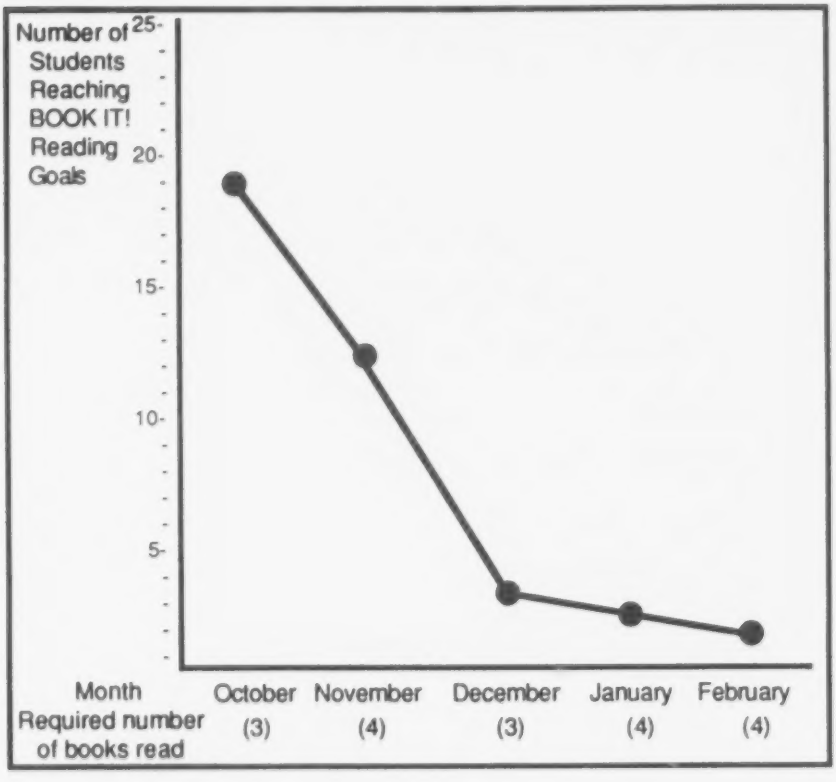

Figure 2

Number of Students Reaching Required Reading Goals in Pizza Hut's BOOK IT! Program

Results of the final 10 weeks of The Book It! reading program were significant. Students in the target group read an average of 1.1 books each. If the target group had attained the specified reading goals by 100 percent, the number of books read would have totaled 11 books read by each student. The target group's average number of books read during the final 10 week period of The Book It! reading program did not indicate to the writer a high degree of book involvement which is an important characteristic of a good leisure-time reader.

Examination of a teacher log conducted over 14 days of 15 minute sustained silent reading (SSR) periods, indicated that students in the target group exhibited inconsistent sustained silent reading habits in the classroom. Students were not instructed to stay on task, only to begin silent reading. Five minutes into the SSR period, the writer of this practicum project observed each student's SSR behavior. The writer assigned a plus symbol, representing +10 points for students who were staying on task, and a minus symbol, representing -10 points for students who were not on task. The highest number of points a student could receive was 140. The target group's points ranged from 130 points, being the highest score, to -110 points, denoting the lowest score. The target group's class average equaled +36 points. This data is summarized in Table 1.

Table I

Teacher Log of Accumulated Points Earned During SSR Periods

SSR Sessions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
1	ab	ab	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-80
2	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+60
3	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	0
4	+	+	+	ab	ab	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+120
5	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+100
6	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	-20
7	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+60
8	+	+	ab	+	ab	+	+	+	ab	+	-	+	-	+	+70
9	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-80
10	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	ab	-	+	-10
11	+	+	ab	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+110
12	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+40
13	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	ab	-	+	-90
14	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-40
15	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	+	+60
16	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	ab	-	+	+	+	+	+70
17	-	-	ab	ab	ab	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-110
18	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-20
19	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+130
20	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+60
21	+	+	ab	ab	ab	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+70
22	+	+	ab	ab	+	+	+	-	ab	+	+	+	-	+	+70
23	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	0
24	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+130
25	+	+	+	+	ab	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+90
26	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+	-10
27	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	ab	+120
28	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+	0
29	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+100
30	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	ab	ab	ab	ab	+	+	+80

ab=absent
+=plus 10 points
-=minus 10 points

It was observed by the writer that some students had difficulty staying on task, some students took more time becoming involved in self-selected reading materials, and a majority of students demonstrated inconsistent sustained silent reading habits. In a personal interview with a fourth grade teacher who conducts daily classroom SSR periods, concern was also expressed about the problem of students staying on task during SSR periods.

According to the DRP Test, reading comprehension is scored in the following instructional levels: at risk, below, on, and above. Test scores of the target group indicated 11 students scored in the "above" level, or approximate national percentile range of 95-99 percentile. Eighteen students scored in the "on" level, or the 43-94 percentile range. (Appendix B: 43) One student was not present when the test was administered. Above average reading achievement is also an indicator of a good leisure-time reader.

The leisure-time reading habits of children are often reflected in the attitudes of parents toward reading. According to the target group's parent surveys, in 17 of 22 questionnaires returned, the parents reported enjoying to read "very much." The parent surveys also showed 17 of 22 parents read aloud to children "often" or "sometimes," as compared to five parents who responded "seldom" or "never." All of the parents' responses to the survey indicated "seldom" or no involvement in read aloud programs during the children's school years. (Appendix C: 45)

It has been observed by the writer that good leisure-time readers

display three characteristics: positive reading attitudes, a high degree of book involvement, and above average reading achievement. The target group's reading attitude surveys and results of the DRP Tests indicated to the writer that students may be paying 'lip service' to the idea of enjoying reading. There was a discrepancy between what students said about enjoying reading and how much time was spent in the actual involvement of reading.

The target group of this study responded positively to questions in the survey such as:

Do you like to read?

Do you ever see your parents reading?

Do you like to be read to by your parents and teachers?

A problem existed for the fourth grade target group who exhibited average to above average reading achievement, but did not possess positive attitudes toward leisure-time reading, nor high levels of book involvement. This practicum project investigated solutions for improving fourth graders' attitudes toward leisure-time reading and increasing book involvement.

The writer of this practicum project arrived at the outcome objectives because of the target group's average to above average reading test scores, inconsistent sustained silent reading habits, low levels of book involvement exhibited in an incentive reading program, parental roles in developing children's attitudes toward reading, and a statement made by the principal, in an interview that 51 percent of the

students in the target group did not select reading as a favorite leisure-time activity. The outcome objectives of this practicum project were:

1. After a period of 10 weeks, 51 percent or more of the students in the target group will select reading as a favorite leisure-time activity, as measured by a student attitude survey given by the writer to the group.

2. After a 10 week period, students in the target group will demonstrate a higher degree of sustained silent reading behavior by increasing the class average of +36 points to +70 points, a gain of +34 points, as evidenced by a daily sustained silent reading teacher observation log conducted during the final 14 days of this practicum project.

3. After a period of 10 weeks, students in the target group will increase the class average of the number of books read by 51 percent, (or five books read per student) as evidenced by a weekly student reading log.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Research conducted by the writer of this practicum study will focus upon recent studies conducted over the last ten years on the following topics: reading attitudes, leisure-time reading, sustained silent reading, reading aloud to children, and the roles played of teachers and parents. These factors influence the intrinsic reading behavior of students and enable them to develop into good leisure-time readers. Heins (1981) reported that teachers and parents who enjoy reading are the most significant force for developing reading enjoyment in children.

According to the Reading Report Card, as cited by Wilson (1986), one might deduct that American schools are doing an effective job of teaching reading. Test scores have stabilized and more minority children are reading. Wilson (1986:2-3) posed these questions, in response to the above statements: "Are test scores the only standard by which to evaluate the efficacy of school reading programs? Ought we have some concern about the kinds of reading Americans are doing?" Wilson's research conducted over the last five years shows, "... only those who can read may. Many don't." Wilson reported that reading programs should be evaluated by the "...amount of real reading students do, how many books, magazines, newspapers, and even comic books, that

students read in a year." American literacy, according to Wilson, should not be measured by test scores, but by the amount of reading Americans actually do.

Wilson (1986:4) reported that recent gains in understanding comprehension processes and language development adopt the belief that "literacy is a tool" for teaching children to become skilled readers. Students with high levels of book reading time were the best predictors of reading success. Students need more opportunities for reading and motivation to read. Wilson stated, "People who read well are better informed consumers and voters. They have more control over their lives and the possibility of making a greater number of choices." Reading is necessary for an individual's successful participation in society.

Rasinski (1988) questioned the concept of a "good" reader. Is a "good" reader only described in terms of skilled reading performances? Is a "good" reader only defined in terms of receiving an "A" or "B" as a reading grade? Is a "good" reader only a student who submissively answers teacher-directed reading assignments? Rasinki addressed the issue of defining what a "good" adult reader is, as compared to what a "good" elementary or secondary reader is. Good adult readers visit book stores and libraries, read two or three books simultaneously, subscribe to magazines and newspapers, and keep abreast on literature related to professional interests. The "good" adult reader does not need to be told what to read, but does enjoy discussing reading materials with others. Rasinski pointed out that most people are capable readers, but either

choose not to read at all, or to read very little.

For some early readers who demonstrate enthusiastic attitudes about reading, the process of reading skills acquisition provide frustrating and tedious experiences. Reading then fails to meet some children's inner needs, and as a result, some children begin to avoid reading. Rasinski (1988) stated:

> Reading educators need to be concerned about aliteracy as they are about illiteracy...Aliteracy begins when the ultimate goals of reading (i.e., the reading attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors of 'good' adult readers) are not reflected in the reading instruction and desired reading behaviors that are part of the school reading curriculum. (page 85)

It is important to look at societal trends which have placed leisure-time reading for children as a low priority. Elementary teachers are burdened with an overloaded curriculum which allows little time in the day for students to be read to, or for students to pursue the pleasures of reading independently during sustained silent reading periods. In a personal interview with a classroom teacher, conducted with this practicum writer, comments were made that time allocated for reading aloud to students was difficult to schedule due to objectives to be covered in the curriculum prior to testing. Can it be that elementary teachers are feeling the pressures of being held accountable for students' test scores causing them to miss opportunities for fostering students' desires to become avid readers?

Today's families are a potpourri of diverse relationships. This is

the era of the single-parent and the double income family. Anderson, Fielding, and Wilson (1988: 301) stated, "Maybe the child from a single parent family more often is called upon to look after younger brothers and sisters,..."leaving less time for reading outside of school. Anderson, et. al. (1988) also related that children of families who ate dinner together demonstrated greater reading proficiency. Reasons in the data did not provide clues as to whether these students' families were more intact, that is, two-parent families, but one explanation for this increase could be that dinner time in these homes provided opportunities for discussions to occur and thereby promoted language development.

Manna (1987:166) stated, "Enthusiasm for reading is caught, not taught." Manna continued to say that parents and teachers should act as role models who express positive attitudes towards reading. According to the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (1987:3), "Children who read well have parents who: read aloud to them, talk to them about their experiences, take them to places, let them watch television, but limit it, and take an interest in their reading progress."

Anderson, Heibert, Scott and Wilkinson (1984) discussed the parent's role in the child's continued reading growth. It was recommended that parents should encourage leisure-time reading, and read and discuss stories with preschool children. This practicum project, however, does not involve preschool children, but fourth grade students, who still enjoy parents reading out loud. Matthews, as cited by Sanacore (1990) expressed that reading aloud to an older child should reflect the

same feelings a parent or a teacher would when holding a child in a lap and reading a favorite story. By giving the older student the same feelings of warmth, the teacher or parent can inspire students into listening and responding to the selection being read.

Smith (1988) reported that parents print visual images into the minds of children. These visual images are there for the child to imitate. Cousert, as cited by Smith (1988) discovered that the most influential factor on elementary school children's success was the amount of time children observed parents reading. Parents who actually discussed what was being read and what the children read had successful readers for children.

Smith (1989) asked teachers to remember a favorite teacher in school who would read aloud to classes after lunch. Morrow (1988) reminded parents and teachers of the importance of the bedtime story being read aloud to children. But, recent studies have begun to focus on the teacher's influence on classroom read aloud sessions. Morrow explained that being read to is not the only factor for enhancing literacy. Methods, environment, attitudes, and the verbal interactions of teacher and students may be major factors influencing literacy enhancement.

Roser and Martinez, as cited by Morrow (1988) described three roles adults must portray during read alouds:

1. Correspondent - adults spark story discussions by asking questions and sharing personal experiences with the audience.

2. Informer/monitor - adults explain aspects of the story and evaluate child's understanding of the story.

3. Directors - adults introduce the story, summarize conclusions, and assume the role of a leader.

These three roles become interchangeable as the student's participation increases in the story.

Reading aloud to children increases vocabulary, comprehension, and language development. Reading aloud affects students' language development by exposing them to different written literary styles. Smith (1989) explained that reading aloud to classes provides opportunities for the teacher or other adult to share above-level literature with students who may not be on the same reading level as the literature being read (Smith 1989).

Anderson, et. al. (1984) suggested that research on the amount of independent silent reading children do in school is related to reading achievement. The estimated amount of silent reading time in a typical primary classroom is seven to eight minutes per day. The middle grades reported an average silent reading time of 15 minutes per day. According to this report, increasing the amount of sustained silent reading time should be a priority for teachers and parents. Vocabulary growth is one of the major gains of independent reading. Some researchers argue that beyond third grade, students attain major vocabulary growth while reading books and other materials. Anderson (1984) reported that reading fluency is also another benefit of independent reading, and avid readers receive 20 times or more practice, than less frequent readers.

Pyle (1990) reported progress by students during SSR periods

who regularly read for pleasure. Pyle observed a small number of students who were reluctant to read independently. Pyle devised questions for students to answer about independent reading, but observed that these questions took the pleasure out of reading.

Pyle then implemented the practice of student writing journals. Over the progression of the school year Pyle reported many changes occurring as a result of the students' journal writing after SSR. Students' entries became longer, even episodical. Students increased vocabulary, and learned how to paraphrase. Pyle observed that sustained silent reading and writing helped students to better comprehend what was read.

Ciccone (1981) suggested that teachers must promote attitudes that reading is not for school only. The Neilsen study, as cited by Ciccone (1981) discovered that home environment strongly influences the attitudes of students toward reading. When students' attitudes improved so did reading ability, when reading ability improved so did students' attitudes.

Greaney (1987) suggested that there is a relationship between leisure-time reading habits and home environment. Greaney stressed that what parents "do" is more important than what they "are." Greaney also indicated that emphasis should be placed on reading in the home.

Ciccone (1981) designed a program whereby students recorded self-selected reading materials onto a pupil log sheet designed by the researcher. The results showed that over a duration of nine weeks, boys

read approximately 17 books and girls read approximately 24 books. The students reported that they enjoyed choosing reading materials as opposed to having someone tell them what to read. The findings showed that students' reading attitudes and interests are also related to self-selected materials.

Richardson (1983) reported the following strategies to stimulate students' interests in reading independently:

1. Students must know that reading is not just another assignment. Students should see an adult reading and hear adults speak positively about reading. Time must be set aside for SSR and discussion of SSR reading experiences.

2. Students must be given the necessary tools to develop into successful, independent readers. For example, the '5-finger test' in which students read a page from a self-selected book. As they read they are to put up one finger each time they meet an unfamiliar word. Students stop at the end of the page and count how many fingers they have used. If students used less than five fingers, that is a good book for independent reading. If students used five or more, students know the book is probably too difficult to read.

3. Teachers or other adults should place emphasis on subjects which relate to students' interests.

4. Teachers should provide student book exchanges so that students may share what is read with adults and classmates. Reading will become more of a meaningful experience.

According to Anderson, et. al. (1988), in a study to find out how leisure-time was spent by fifth graders outside of school, it was reported that there are great differences among children in the amount of leisure-time reading. Children, in this study, completed daily diaries recording how many minutes were spent on reading, homework, watching

television, hobbies, etc. The findings suggested that reading books for pleasure was the most important factor of reading proficiency. Reading books for pleasure, however, decreases after fifth grade. The strongest yields in reading proficiency and the best indicator of a student's reading growth was from second to fifth grade.

Anderson, et. al. (1988) suggested that interventions to increase book involvement often have positive results, however, Anderson observed that no research has measured the amount of reading at a group level, nor does any research relate the amount of reading to changes in reading achievement at the individual level. Anderson, et. al. (1988) suggested that the results of well-designed evaluations of interventions to increase the amount of book reading should demonstrate strong results.

Manna (1987:165) observed the following factors in influencing students' attitudes toward leisure-time reading:

Positive	Negative
Out of School Factors	In School Factors
Family reading/storytelling	Book reports
Libraries/library cards	Reading groups
Friends	Contests (treated with disdain by students,embarrassing)

Positive School Factors
Expressive oral reading by the teacher
Teachers who extended reading into other subject areas
Teacher enthusiasm
Large and small group discussions
Personal questioning

To reiterate Manna (1987:166), "Enthusiasm for reading is caught, not taught: that parents and teachers should serve as models for the kinds of rewards reading promises." Naisbitt, as cited by Adkins (1989) explained how in the future there will be a movement back to reexamining mankind's humanity. What better gift to give students than by allowing students to examine the human experience through the wonder of books, and from the positive reading role models of teachers, parents, and other adults (Trelease, 1985).

The writer also attended two in-service training workshops related to improving the leisure-time reading attitudes of elementary students. One workshop entitled "Rockin' Readers", given during The 14th Annual Florida School Volunteer Conference, recruited volunteers 50 years and older to volunteer on a weekly basis for one or two hours as read aloud role models for students in the Head Start Program. Volunteers selected reading materials and a rocker was provided in the media center for read aloud sessions. These sessions helped develop reading readiness in children lacking the necessary skills for learning to read. This program helped to develop students' self-esteem and emotional maturity through a nurturing relationship with a 'rockin' reader' volunteer.

The second in-service training workshop the writer attended was given by Teachers Applying Whole Language. The presenter, Shelly Harwayne, suggested that teachers "saturate" the classroom with examples of fiction. Educators cannot expect students to write fiction unless students are given opportunities to explore the genre of fiction.

Classrooms must provide the environment for students to observe the Reading/Writing Connection. If students have enough experience with literature and writing, the connection will be made.

Solution strategies uniquely applicable to the identified problem were chosen by the writer because: there is easy accessibility of books for students' self-selection, library time does not have to be scheduled for the students to check out and return books, and volunteer and parent cooperation in this school is significant. These two sources of volunteers supported participation in the target group's read aloud sessions. The principal and assistant principal advocate increased leisure-time reading and were involved in the read aloud sessions.

The target group's school was also involved in a school-wide incentive reading program in honor of the school's 25 year anniversary. The students were instructed to turn in titles of books read. The titles were credited to the students by putting the names of the students on a label cut into the shape of a feather which was then attached to a large fantasy bird. This fantasy bird was displayed in the library. Students were encouraged to "dress" the school's bird for the 25 year anniversary.

In addition, the target group's school recruited professional storytellers and read aloud volunteers to visit all of the classrooms on the anniversary day. This suggestion was proposed by the writer as a result of the practicum plan. The read aloud volunteers used in the target group's school anniversary day included school board members, the district attorney , and the superintendent of schools.

The solution strategies implemented in this practicum project were to:

1. Develop a read aloud program to effectively use teachers, parents, and other adults as positive reading role models in the classroom.

2. Implement daily sustained silent reading periods of 15 minutes with observation conducted by the writer.

3. Design weekly student reading logs for recording the number of books read by the target group, and have logs monitored by the writer.

4. Require students to write daily entries into writing journals about what they are reading. These will be reviewed by the writer.

5. Distribute written parent, teacher, and other adult interview questions at the end of each read aloud session.

These strategies were preferred by the writer because from the research conducted about reading attitudes, sustained silent reading, independent reading, leisure-time reading, and parental roles in reading, these strategies appeared to be the most practical to use with the target group. The strategies mentioned produced the desired results for improving students' attitudes toward leisure-time reading and increasing book involvement.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

The implementation plan of this practicum project took place over a 10 week period with an evaluation given during the eleventh week. Implementation began on March 19, 1990 and ended on June 4, 1990. The tasks that were performed, in this sequence, included:

1. Conducting daily classroom sustained silent reading periods of 15 minutes, under the systematic observation of the classroom teacher.

2. Conducting 30 minutes of teacher, parent, and other adult classroom read aloud sessions and discussions to the target group during the 10 week implementation plan.

3. Designing, administering, and collecting weekly student reading logs in which the target group of students recorded how many books were read over the 10 week plan.

4. Administering a written student reading attitude survey to the target group at the end of the implementation plan.

Included in the implementation plan were 30 minute read aloud sessions which occurred three times a week. Fifteen minute time blocks were allotted daily for SSR and library book exchanges. Ten minutes were given daily for student journal writing and discussion. A typical

week in the implementation plan resembled the following example:

Week 1 (Distribute Student Reading Logs)

Days 1,3, and 5

10:00 a.m. -10:30 a.m.	Teacher/Parent/Adult Read Aloud Session/Discussion
11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	SSR
1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Library (check out and return books)
1:45 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.	Student Journal Writing

Days 2 and 4

11:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	SSR
1:30 p.m. - 1:45 p.m.	Library (check out and return books)
1:45 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.	Student Journal Writing

Day 5 (Monitoring)

Collect and return student journals for teacher review and comments.

Collect student reading logs for teacher recordings.

Following each read aloud session, the read aloud volunteers were given questionnaires to answer. This questionnaire furnished insights about the read aloud sessions to the writer of the practicum project. Comments stated by the read aloud volunteers to the interview questions included the following:

> "Yes, I enjoyed participating in the read aloud sessions. In this age of T.V. and video, it brings us to a medium that leaves room for imagination and for developing listening skills." SLD teacher

> "Yes, I was pleased with the students' reactions to the read alouds. However, I feel I will get better reactions from the students if I had more opportunities to participate in read aloud sessions." P.E. teacher

> "Yes, I enjoyed participating in the read aloud sessions very much. Perhaps the 'ham' in me enjoys the audience!" Parent

The writer of this practicum report agrees with the comment about allowing more opportunities for volunteers to read aloud. If a volunteer has not practiced reading aloud to children, the narration of the story becomes rather "stiff". Students of the target group were a polite audience and responded appropriately. After each read aloud, one student was chosen to design and illustrate a 'thank-you' card for the read aloud volunteer, and all the members of the target group signed the card.

At the end of the implementation plan, students of the target group were asked by the writer to complete a student questionnaire. Students of the target group responded to the question of liking or disliking journal writing with the following comments:

"I liked journal writing because I could write down my feelings."

"I liked writing in my journal because it's like a diary except it's not personal."

"I like to write down the day's happenings."

"Because when I get older I will be able to see what I did everyday and how I felt."

"I want to do something else besides journal writing."

The writer of this practicum observed the target group's behavior during journal writing. Many of the students wrote pages of one day's events. Others would write only a sentence or two. Every week the journals were collected and the writer of this report would make positive comments and give each student a sticker on the last entry.

Resources

Identification of people needed for the project was the responsibility of the practicum writer. Parents, teachers, adult volunteers, students, principal and assistant principal were involved in the practicum project. The practicum writer contacted all persons involved in the practicum project and scheduled the read aloud sessions into the implementation plan.

The practicum writer designed and developed the following data:

1. A post-questionnaire to survey students' attitudes toward leisure-time reading. (Appendix D: 50)

2. A teacher observation log for recording the sustained silent reading behavior of the target group. (Appendix D: 51)

3. A weekly student reading log for the students in the target group to record the number of books read. (Appendix D: 52)

4. A sign-up sheet for read aloud volunteers. Volunteers may sign up at an open house scheduled during the second day of implementation. (Appendix D: 53)

5. A classroom list of read aloud "do's" and "don'ts" for read aloud volunteers. (Appendix D: 54)

6. A list of possible student, parent, teacher, or other adult interview questions to be given to the target group at the end of implementation. Parent, teacher, or other adult interview questions were given at the end of each read aloud session. (Appendix D: 56)

Monitoring

Monitoring of the implementation plan occurred at daily and weekly intervals. The process for monitoring was the daily teacher

observation log of SSR behavior and the weekly collection and review of student reading logs. Interviews with students, parents, teachers, and other adults was considered as part of this monitoring process. The practicum writer was also responsible for data collection procedures.

Provisions in the implementation schedule were made for adjustment of mid-course corrections. The mid-course corrections were entered into the writer's daily classroom diary kept strictly for recording comments or suggestions made by teachers, parents, students, and other adults participating in the practicum project. Schedule adjustments were also made for special education students, field trips, holidays, and read aloud sessions, when warranted.

Evaluation

The evaluation designs for this practicum project took place after the 10 week implementation plan. The evaluation designs include the following:

1. A post-questionnaire was given to the target group to survey students' attitudes toward leisure-time reading. The target group's responses to leisure-time activities were tallied, and then a percentage was derived from those responses, as in the pre-questionnaires. This percentage of post-questionnaire responses was compared to the percentage of responses attained in the pre-questionnaire.

2. A group criterion design, the teacher's SSR observation log, was used to compare pre and post-class averages of the target group's reading behavior during SSR periods.

3. Student reading logs were used to measure and compare pre and post-class averages of the total number of books read by the target group.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The writer of this practicum report achieved the following results to the specified outcome objectives. Outcome objective number one was not met by the target group to the degree of 51 percent as stated in the objective. The student reading attitude surveys resulted in an increase of 21 percent. Only 36 percent of the target group selected reading as a favorite leisure-time activity. The objective needed to have five more students select reading as a favorite leisure-time activity to reach the goal of 51 percent. Nevertheless, reading was the target group's number one choice of favorite leisure-time activities. Reading, sports, video games, and television viewing was the order of favorite leisure-time activities chosen by the target group. This data has been summarized in Figure 3.

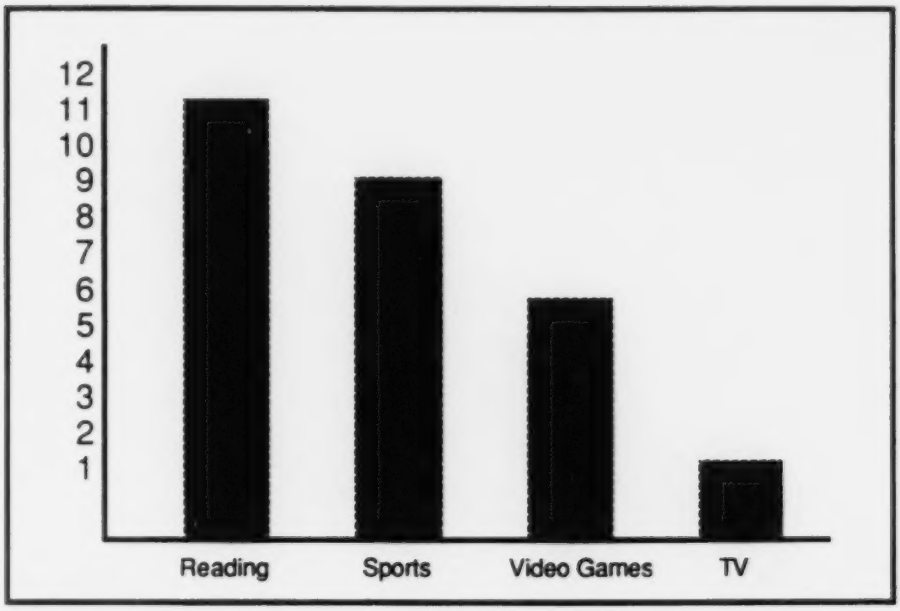

Figure 3

First Choice Leisure-Time Activities
of Fourth Graders

Outcome objective number two was successfully accomplished. Results of SSR behavior conducted during the final 14 days of the implementation plan produced a class average of +97 points. The target group increased the class average by +61 points. This data is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2

SSR Log

SSR Sessions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
1	ab	+	+	-	+	ab	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+60
2	+	+	+	ab	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+110
3	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	ab	ab	+	+	+	+60
4	+	+	+	+	+	ab	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+130
5	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+100
6	ab	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+50
7	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+140
8	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+140
9	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	+	+	+20
10	+	+	+	-	-	+	ab	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+80
11	+	+	+	+	ab	+	+	+	+	+	+	ab	ab	+	+110
12	ab	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+130
13	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+120
14	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	ab	+	+	+	+	+	+	+130
15	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+120
16	+	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	0
17	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+120
18	+	+	+	+	+	+	ab	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+130
19	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+120
20	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+120
21	+	+	ab	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+110
22	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+40
23	+	+	+	ab	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+130
24	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+80
25	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+120
26	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+100
27	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+100
28	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+100
29	-	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+60
30	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	ab	ab	+	-	-	+	+	+80

ab=absent
+=SSR
-=noSSR

Students in the target group were motivated to participate in SSR by the peer role modeling of SSR behavior in the classroom. Due to the daily consistency of SSR, the target group returned from changing classes, sat down, and began SSR without having to be reminded to do so by the writer. Comments made by members of the target group to the student interview question about SSR demonstrate that the students looked forward to SSR. For example:

"I liked SSR because you don't have to do work."

"I liked it because it was great."

"I kind of liked it because it is the only time I have to read for fun during school."

"I like SSR because I like to read."

"I liked it because you got to read and you had to be quiet."

"I liked it because it gives me the chance to read what I want."

Outcome objective number three was accomplished. Significant results were achieved in regards to the number of books read by members of the target group. The target group read a total of 234 books, or a class average of 7.8 books read per student. The highest number of books read by a student during the 10 week implementation plan was 18, and the lowest number of books read by a student in the target group was two. All students of the target group kept records of the books read and the practicum writer reviewed and discussed some of the books listed in the students' reading logs. The target group increased the class average by 78 percent, 26 more percentage points than stated in

outcome objective number three. This data is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3

Reading Log

Student #	No. of Books Read	Student #	No. of Books Read
1	8	16	6
2	10	17	8
3	4	18	8
4	11	19	9
5	10	20	12
6	3	21	18
7	7	22	3
8	8	23	9
9	6	24	7
10	10	25	7
11	6	26	5
12	8	27	5
13	7	28	2
14	10	29	11
15	7	30	11

The success achieved by outcome objectives two and three were influenced by two positive variables. First, the school-wide incentive reading program was motivating to some members of the target group. This program did not resemble a reading contest, such as Pizza Hut's BOOK IT! program, but was more representative as a recognition of each student's participation in the target group's school anniversary celebration. Students contributed by reading and then observing the feathers (each feather representing one book read) growing on the

fantasy bird displayed in the library. Second, the read aloud sessions motivated students in the target group to select either the same read aloud book, or a book written by the same author. These two interventions to promote reading worked positively together and complimented the writer's practicum project. Reading aloud to students of the target group's school occurred as a result of the writer's practicum project.

The writer expected all three objectives would be met in order to be a successful practicum. Even though outcome objective number one was not met, the writer feels the practicum project was a success because 11 out of 28 students selected reading as a favorite leisure-time activity, and because objectives two and three achieved better results than expected. (Appendix C:48) A negative variable influencing outcome objective number one could have been the length of the implementation plan. If the 10 week plan had been expanded, the results of objective one might have been achieved. The writer is pleased that the target group, as a whole, selected reading as a favorite leisure-time activity. The practicum project made some impact on students' attitudes towards leisure-time reading. It is the writer's opinion that teachers, parents, and other adults can increase students' book involvement, as indicated by the success of outcome objectives two and three.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

This practicum writer shared the project's findings with the principal, assistant principal, and curriculum resource teacher, in an effort to promote a school-wide sustained silent reading program. Also, in working with the curriculum resource teacher, who is the school's volunteer coordinator, this writer plans to develop read aloud sessions, using volunteers to be held in all classrooms. If this suggestion cannot be attained on a school-wide basis, read aloud sessions will be held at the school's media center. Read aloud sessions will not only involve parents, but local celebrities, policemen, firemen, senior citizens and other members of the community. Videotaped read aloud sessions will also be conducted, with the verbal permission of the read aloud volunteers, to foster and promote reading aloud to all classrooms. The videotaped read aloud sessions will be made available at the media center for students, teachers, and parents to share with others.

The writer of this practicum project redesigned question number nine of the student pre-questionnaire which surveyed attitudes toward leisure-time reading. The target group exhibited frustration in attempting to rate favorite leisure-time activities and the writer had to repeatedly explain the directions. The student pre-questionnaire was redesigned in

an attempt to be more understandable to the target group when given as the post-questionnaire.

The students will primarily benefit from SSR periods, and the read aloud sessions, held live, or on videotape. Parents, teachers, and other adults will also benefit from the interaction with the students and the positive feelings one receives from working with elementary students.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Monthly Report of Volunteer Support

Appendix A

January Monthly Report of Volunteer Support

	No. of Volunteers	No. of Hours
Tutoring/General Classroom	70	675
Enrichment/Special Projects	47	270.5
Media Center	11	188
Health Room	-	-
Clerical/Materials	47	310
Guidance	-	-
Volunteer Coordinator	2	10
Total	177	1453.5

PTA/PTO Booster Group: No. of Volunteers 10
No. of Hours 306

Describe: (Board Meeting, carnival, bookfair...): Meetings, magazine drive, Tiger Trot

Appendix B

Degrees of Reading Power Test Results
Grade 4
Raw Scores and National Percentile Equivalents
Quarter 1

Appendix B

DRP Test Results - Grade 4

Student#	DRP Raw Score	Student#	DRP Raw Score
1	31	16	48
2	44	17	43
3	51	18	49
4	52	19	55
5	51	20	52
6	46	21	54
7	53	22	56
8	53	23	43
9	36	24	54
10	33	25	51
11	48	26	46
12	42	27	49
13	41	28	50
14	50	29	53
15	44		

Appendix B

Degrees of Reading Power
Raw Score Cutoffs for Instructional Levels
with National Percentile Equivalents
1989-1990

Grade 4 - Quarter 1
DRP Form PA8

Instructional Level	Raw Score	(Approximate National Percentile)
AT RISK	0 - 21	(1 - 24% ile)
BELOW	22 - 27	(25 - 42% ile)
ON	28 - 50	(43 - 94% ile)
ABOVE	51+	(95 - 99% ile)

Appendix C

Tallying Results of Parent and Student Surveys

Appendix C

Tallying Results of Parent Surveys

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	Don't Know
1. Before this school year was your child read to as part of the school day?	4	14	2	na	2
2. Do you read to your child?	7	10	4	1	na
3. Were you read to by parents as a child?	2	8	8	3	2
4. Were you read to by teachers as a child?	3	16	3	na	1
5. Before this school year were you ever asked to volunteer to read aloud to your child's class?	na	na	5	15	1
6. Before this school year was your child ever assigned homework that involved reading to your child?	2	4	4	11	1
7. Do you support your school's library with time, money, or work on book fairs?	7	6	2	6	1
8. Have you ever given your child a book as a gift?	14	6	na	2	na
9. Do you enjoy reading?	17	5	na	na	na

Appendix C

Tallying Results of Parent Surveys

	More than 20 Hours	15-20 hours	10-15 hours	5-10 hours	5 hours or less
10. During Mon-Fri, how many hours of T.V. do you watch?		1	3	9	8
11. How many Hours (Mon-Fri) does your child spend in the following activities?					
Dance Lessons					13
Music Lessons				1	11
Church Activities			1	5	10
Video Games			1	5	10
Scouts				1	14
Sports		2	3	6	6
Reading	1	2	3	5	10
Homework			4	7	10
Watching TV	2	3	4	8	4
Other (Playing with friends, religious training, housework, chores, cheerleading.)		1		3	4

Adapted from "20 Questions," The Reading Teacher, Oct. 1987.

Appendix C

Tallying Results of Student Surveys

	Alot	Sometimes	Not Much	Never
1. Before this school year did your teachers read aloud to you at school?	3	21	3	0
2 Do your parents read aloud to you?	4	6	13	4
3. Do you ever see your parents reading?	19	7	2	na
4. Do you and your parents ever talk about the books you read?	2	11	4	8
5. Before this school year has your mom or dad ever come to your class and read aloud?	na	na	3	23
6. Do you like to read?	16	7	2	1
7. Do you like to be read to by your parents and teachers?	9	13	4	na
8. Have you ever received books as gifts?	9	9	8	1

9. Which activity would you rather do: (Rate 1-9, one being your favorite and nine being your least favorite) Top six choices

Play Sports	11	Dance lessons	2
Scouts	1	Music lessons	na
Reading	4	Church Activities	na
Watching TV	6	Video Games	6

Adapted from "20 Questions," The Reading Teacher, Oct. 1987.

Appendix C

Tallying Results
Post - Questionnaire
Surveying Students' Attitude Towards
Leisure-Time Reading

	Alot	Sometimes	Not Much	Never
1. Has your teacher read aloud to you during this school year?	15	13	na	na
2. Do your parents read aloud to you at home?	1	6	10	11
3 Do you ever see your parents reading?	12	13	2	1
4. Do you and your parents ever talk about the books you read?	5	8	8	7
5. Have your parents visited your classroom to read aloud to your class?	13	na	na	15
6. Do you like to read?	15	10	2	1
7. Do you like to be read to by your parents and teachers?	9	13	3	2

Rate your favorite things you like to do in your spare time (Rate 1-4, one being your first choice, two-second choice, etc.)

Play Sports	9	Watching TV	2
Reading	11	Video Games	6

Adapted from "20 Questions," The Reading Teacher, Oct. 1987.

Appendix D

Samples of Implementation Forms and Lists

Appendix D

Sample
Post - Questionnaire
Surveying Students' Attitudes Towards
Leisure-Time Reading

Directions: Place an "X" under the best answer.

	Alot	Sometimes	Not Much	Never
1. Have your teachers read aloud to you at school this year?	___	___	___	___
2. Do your parents read aloud to you at home?	___	___	___	___
3 Do you ever see your parents reading?	___	___	___	___
4. Do you and your parents ever talk about the books you read?	___	___	___	___
5. Have your parents visited your classroom to read aloud to your class?	___	___	___	___
6. Do you like to read?	___	___	___	___
7. Do you like to be read to by your parents and teachers?	___	___	___	___

Rate your favorite things you like to do in your spare time (Rate 1-8, one being your first choice, two-second choice, etc.)

Play Sports	___	Dance Lessons	___
Scouts	___	Music Lessons	___
Reading	___	Church Activities	___
Watching TV	___	Video Games	___

Adapted from "20 Questions," The Reading Teacher, Oct. 1987.

Appendix D

Sample
Teacher Observation Log of
SSR Behavior in the Classroom

SSR Session	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Student Names															

Appendix D

Sample
Student Reading Log Entry Form

Name: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Author: _____

No. of Pages: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Teacher's Initials: _____

Appendix D

Sample
Form of Parent Sign-up Sheet
for Classroom Read Alouds

Name	Best Days	Best Times	Phone Number

Appendix D

The Classroom's List of Reading Aloud Do's and Don'ts

DO'S:

1. Read aloud as often as your classroom schedule will allow.
2. Try to set a "traditional" reading aloud time daily.
3. Give students extra time to get ready for the read aloud time. Set the mood.
4. Make sure students can see the pictures of a book you are reading to them.
5. Discuss the story with the class. Summarize.
6. Use alot of vocal expression. Monotone voices are forbidden.
7. Bring a "third dimension" to the book. (eat peaches if you are reading James and the Giant Peach by Roald Dahl).
8. Make the author come to life by reading his/her background.
9. Be a reading advocate by your reading example.

DON'T:

1. Read a book if it is not enjoyable to you or the kids.
2. Read above kids' intellectual or emotional maturity.
3. Choose books that have been seen alot on TV.
4. Begin a book that you won't have time to finish.
5. Use a book as punishment. For example, "If you don't turn in your homework, I'm not going to read to you today."
6. Be upset when students interrupt the story with questions. Answer them quickly and move on.

Adapted from The Reading Aloud Handbook, by Jim Trelease.

Appendix D

Sample
Teacher, Parent, or other Adult Interview Questions

1. Did you enjoy participating in the read aloud sessions?

2. What, in particular, did you enjoy?

3. Why did you choose the selected material for your read aloud sessions?

4. Were you pleased at the students' reactions to your read aloud?

5. Do you have any suggestions for improving the read aloud sessions?

6. Would you participate in more read aloud sessions if offered?

Appendix D

Sample
Student Interview Questions

1. Did you enjoy the read aloud sessions in your class?

2. What was your favorite story or book?

3. Have you tried reading any other books written by the same author?

4. Do you like to discuss the books you read with your friends? Parents? Teachers?

5. What did you like/dislike about SSR?

6. What did you like/dislike about journal writing?